

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter because they simply clarify the subject matter recited in the pending claims. Claims 6-9 are provisionally withdrawn from consideration as drawn to a non-elected group of claims. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed below; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for Appeal, should an Appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the Final Rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action, in the Response to Arguments, fails in its analysis of Applicants' previous arguments in support of rejoinder. The Office Action states that "the information medium as recited can be made by many methods such as injection molding or printing." Independent claim 6 recites an information medium manufactured by the steps according to claim 1. As such, upon finding of claim 1 allowable for the reasons indicated below, because the subject matter of claim 6 is coextensive with claim 1, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder and examination of claims 6-9. The basis of the Restriction Requirement, as reiterated in the Response to Arguments, is faulted in that the information medium according to claim 6 cannot be manufactured by any process other than that specifically recited, which is the same process comprising all the features specifically recited in the method of claim 1.

The Office Action, on page 4, rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,562,550 to Takahata et al. (hereinafter "Takahata") in view of JP-A-04-263140 (hereinafter "JP '140"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takahata teaches preparation of an optical disk master including a step of treating a photoresist layer with a surfactant prior to an exposing step of the photoresist layer or between an exposing step and a developing step of the photoresist layer (Abstract). With reference to Figs. 1E and 1F and col. 5, lines 58-64 of Takahata, the Office Action asserts that the preliminary treatment feature positively recited in independent claim 1 is considered to be taught, or at least to have been suggested, by Takahata. The reference to any treatment steps indicated in Takahata regards treatment with a surfactant such as, for example, a one percent solution of an amphoteric surfactant in pure water by spin rinsing for 30 seconds (col. 5, lines 58-60). After this treatment, Takahata teaches that the photoresist layer is washed with water by spin rinsing with ultra pure water for 90 seconds (col. 5, lines 62-64). There is no teaching, nor suggestion, of providing a metal catalyst on a surface of said uneven pattern, activating said metal catalyst, and then washing the surface of said uneven pattern on which said metal catalyst is provided with a liquid, as is positively recited in the pending claims.

The claims recite, among other features, providing a metal catalyst on a surface of said uneven pattern after manufacturing the photoresist master, activating said metal catalyst, and then washing the surface of said uneven pattern on which said metal catalyst is provided with a liquid, as preliminary treatments to the step of forming said thin metal film on said photoresist layer. As such, these steps comprise steps in the method that are not even reasonably suggested by the surfactant treatment of Takahata. There is no suggestion of providing a metal catalyst on a surface and activating said metal catalyst. Additionally, the recited activating and washing steps occur after manufacturing the photoresist master, *i.e.* not either prior to the exposing step

or between the exposing step and the developing step, but rather after the developing step is complete.

The Office Action, in response to Applicants previous arguments indicates that Takatada is considered to clearly teach the steps of manufacturing a photoresist master upon which the Office Action relies. Specific reference is made to Takahata at col. 6, lines 27 and 28 in which Takahata is asserted to teach the preliminary treatment includes the steps of providing metal catalyst which is washed with pure water to render the subject matter of at least claims 2 and 4 obvious in view of the teachings of the applied prior art references. Takahata, however, at least at col. 6, lines 27-28 and col. 5, lines 62-63, discloses that "after the treatment, the photoresist layer was washed with ultra-pure water" and "it was then treated with a surfactant and washed with water." In this regard, Takahata teaches a step of washing with water after developing the latent image. The subject matter of the pending claims specifically recites that washing with water occurs after the step of activating the metal catalyst on the surface of the uneven pattern. Takahata cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or even to have suggested, the combination of features recited in the pending claims specifically including the washing step at the point in the method that is recited.

JP '140 is applied only regarding a step of forming a light absorption layer on a glass substrate. As such, JP '140 is not applied in a manner that would overcome the above-identified shortfall in the application of Takahata to the subject matter of the pending claims.

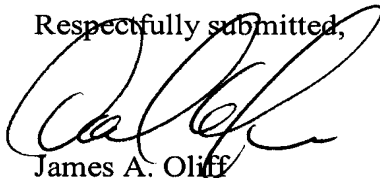
For at least these reasons, a combination of Takahata and JP '140 cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested the combinations of all the features recited in at least independent claims 1, 3 and 5. Additionally, claims 2 and 4 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by a combination of Takahata and JP '140 for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claims, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahata in view of JP '140 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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